

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG SU

SUBJ: FAHMY ON SUDANESE DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY: FAHMY APPRECIATED PRESIDENT FORD'S MESSAGE TO NUMEIRI, BUT REGRETTED IT WAS NOT SENT DURING THE COUP WHEN SUCH US SUPPORT NEEDED MOST. NUMEIRI DESCRIBED AS "CRAZY AND ERRATIC", YET ONLY MAN AVAILABLE. USG, FAHMY CLAIMED, HAS ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN TO SUPPORT AL-MADHDI ELEMENTS. NATIONAL FRONT WAS BACKBONE OF ABORTIVE COUP AND SUPPORTED BY QADDAFI, ERITREANS AND SOVIETS. EGYPTIANS HAD NOTED OVERLAND MOVEMENT FROM LIBYA TO SUDAN AND HAD EARLIER BEEN ADVISED BY HIGH-PLACED LIBYAN RCC SOURCE COUP WOULD BE STAGED MAY 25. DURING COUP, CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE DEVELOPED AMONG ARMY, GOVERNMENT AND POLICE. ONLY MUBAHITH REMAINED LOYAL TO NUMEIRI. PUBLIC OPINION APATHETIC. NUMEIRI AGAIN IN CONTROL, BUT HIS POSITION WEAK. GOE WILL CONTINUE SUPPORT NUMEIRI, BUT BELIEVES THIS SHOULD BE A COMMON EFFORT OF US, ARABS AND WESTERN STATES. END SUMMARY

1. DURING MY MEETING WITH FAHMY IN ALEXANDRIA JULY 5, WE DISCUSSED RECENT ABORTIVE SUDANESE COUP. RECALLING HIS AND PRESIDENT SADAT'S EARLIER SUGGESTION FOR USG SUPPORT OF NUMEIRI, I DREW HIS ATTENTION TO PRESIDENT FORD'S MESSAGE OF SUPPORT DELIVERED THE PREVIOUS DAY. I ALSO TOLD HIM WE HAD INFORMED THE
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SUDANESE THAT AN AID REP WILL VISIT SUDAN WITHIN NEXT

MONTH TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF AID. I ASKED THAT FAHMY CONVEY THIS INFORMATION TO THE PRESIDENT.

2. FAHMY WAS APPRECIATIVE, BUT THOUGH WE SHOULD HAVE ISSUED A PUBLIC STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR NUMEIRI WHILE THE COUP WAS UNDERWAY, NOT SIMPLY AFTERWARDS. HE ARGUED IT IS NOT SOLELY AND EGYPTIAN, BUT A COMMON RESPONSIBILITY WHICH USG, WESTERN AND ARAB GOVERNMENTS SHARE OF BUTTRESSING NUMEIRI TO WITHSTAND WHAT HE CALLED COMMUNIST SUBVERSION. UNFORTUNATELY, NUMEIRI IS "CRAZY AND ERRATIC", YET HE IS THE ONLY MAN AVAILABLE FOR THE JOB. USG, HE THEN, COMMENTED, HAS ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN TO SUPPORT AL-MAHDI ELEMENTS IN THE SUDAN. I TOLD HIM HE WAS TOTALLY WRONG, BUT HE INSISTED THIS "HAS LONG BEEN WELL KNOWN".

3. READING FROM A MEMORANDUM PREPARED BY "EGYPTIAN INTELLIGENCE" ON THE ABORTIVE SUDANESE COUP, FAHMY SAID THE CORE OF THE REBELS HAD BEEN THE NATIONAL FRONT. THEY HAILED LARGELY FROM WESTERN SUDAN AND MANY WERE MAHDI SUPPORTERS. QADDAFI, THE ERITREANS AND THE SOVIETS WERE ALSO INVOLVED. IN FACT, DURING THE FIGHTING, ARAB-SPEAKING SOVIET AND EAST GERMAN EMBASSY OFFICERS IN KHARTOUM WERE SEEN IN THE STREETS WITH THE REBELS. THE EGYPTIAN BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS ARE PROBABLY BEHIND THE LIBYAN INTERVENTION. THE BULK OF THE ARMS AND EQUIPMENT CAPTURED IS OF SOVIET MANUFACTURE AND ASSUMED TO HAVE BEEN DELIVERED BY THE SOVIETS TO LIBYA AND PROVIDED BY THE LATTER TO THE REBELS. EGYPTIAN AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE HAD NOTED ABOUT FIVE DAYS AGO TEN LORRIES, FOUR LAND ROVERS, AND A LARGE STATION WAGON CROSSING IN THE SUDAN AT OWEINAT ON THE LIBYAN -EGYPTIAN- SUDANESE BORDER AND HAD ADVISED THE SUDANESE AUTHORITIES OF THIS MOVEMENT.

4. GOE, FAHMY CONTINUED, INITIALLY HAD BEEN ADVISED BY A HIGH-PLACED LIBYAN RCC SOURCE IN LIBYA THAT A COUP ATTEMPT WOULD BE MADE ON MAY 25. THIS WAS CONVEYED TO NUMEIRI. WHEN NOTHING HAPPENED ON MAY 25, EGYPTIANS BEGAN TO WONDER WHETHER THE LIBYAN INFORMANT

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MEANT JUNE 25, BUT COULD NOT CONVENIENTLY GET IN TOUCH WITH LIBYAN SOURCE. IN ANY EVENT, GOE HAD BEEN EXPECTING SOMETHING TO HAPPEN. WHEN COUP BROKE OUT, EGYPTIAN SOURCES IN KHARTOUM REPORTED A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE WITHIN BOTH THE ARMY AND THE GOVERNMENT. PUBLIC OPINION WAS COMPLETELY INDIFFERENT AND ADOPTING A WAIT AND SEE POSTURE. SOME OF THE POLICE FORCE ALSO VACILLATED, BUT THE MUBAHITH REMAINED

LOYAL TO NUMEIRI. THE REBELS HAD BEEN WELL ORGANIZED AND ARMED AND THE FIGHTING HAD BEEN FIERCE WITH HEAVY CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES, INCLUDING VARIOUS SENIOR SUDANESE MILITARY OFFICERS. THE REBELS HAD ATTACKED EVERYONE IN UNIFORM AND EVEN SOME CUSTOMS OFFICIALS WHO HAD BEEN WEARING UNIFORMS HAD BEEN KILLED.

5. NUMEIRI IS NOW AGAIN IN CONTROL, BUT EGYPTIANS STILL CONSIDER HIS OVERALL POSTURE AS DICEY. NUMEIRI INTENDS BRING COMPLAINT AGAINST LIBYA IN UNSC AND ALSO IN ARAB LEAGUE. GOE WILL SUPPORT SUDANESE COMPLAINT. AT NUMEIRI'S REQUEST, SUDANESE 1,500 MAN STRONG BRIGADE IN EGYPT WAS AIRLIFTED BACK TO KHARTOUM ON JULY 3 IN THREE FLIGHTS OF ELEVEN, SIX AND ELEVEN AIRCRAFT. THE OPERATION HAD GONE WELL. ADDITIONALLY 40 TANKS OF THE SUDANESE BRIGADE AND SOME EGYPTIAN ARMORED CARS HAVE BEEN SENT BY SHIP AND SHOULD HAVE ARRIVED AT PORT SUDAN YESTERDAY.

6. FAHMY SAYS PRESIDENT SADAT IS ELATED AT NUMEIRI'S SUCCESS AND NOTES THAT GOE WAS PREPARED TO DEPLOY EGYPTIAN TROOPS TO ASSIST HIM IF NEEDED. HE ALSO UNDERSTANDS THAT NUMEIRI INTENDS TO EXPEL ALL ERITREANS FROM THE SUDAN.
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